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ABSTRACT

This booklet outlines the principles of a New Compact for Learning between families, communities, and schools in New York. Its main ideas are that: (1) all children can learn and contribute to their families and communities; (2) parents, teachers, and other community members must work together to help children learn; (3) a society must demand the best from everyone and help children live and work together now and in the future; (4) all children should have good schools, good teachers, and an equal opportunity to learn; (5) each person must accept responsibility for making sure that children do not fail; and (6) communities should praise schools, students, families, and teachers who do well and give help where it is needed. To carry out these ideas, parents need to support their children at home, communicate with their children's educators, support their local schools, become advocates for education, and share in decision making. The booklet provides addresses and telephone numbers where parents and community members can find out more about the New Compact for Learning and Parent Partnerships. (MDM)

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# A NEW COMPACT FOR LEARNING

## PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

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The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department

Dear Parents, Guardians, and All Who Care for Children:

I'm a parent of children who attended public schools. I spent many years as a teacher and administrator before I became Commissioner. So, I know what is right with our schools, what is working. But I also know what is not working. Our schools fail many children. When children's needs are not met, they do not learn. Their hopes and their families' aspirations are crushed.

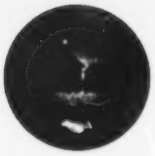
We must change our educational system so that all students learn, so that they are curious, questioning, thoughtful, and hardworking. We hope they will be self-disciplined, responsible, and prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

The school system cannot make the needed changes by itself. We must work together—families, students, teachers, administrators, school board members, and people from businesses, community organizations, libraries, higher education, cultural and religious institutions. We need to form partnerships so that all of our children learn.

The New York State Board of Regents and I invite you to sign on as a full partner in **A NEW COMPACT FOR LEARNING**. Please join us.

Cordially,

Thomas Sobol



## PRINCIPLES OF THE REGENTS POLICY STATEMENT ON PARENT PARTNERSHIPS: LINKING FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND SCHOOLS

*"It takes the whole village to raise a child."*

*African Proverb*

*The family, the community, and the school share responsibility for educating children.*

- Parents are children's first and most enduring teachers.
- Parents have a right and a responsibility to be involved in the education of their children.
- When parents are involved in their children's education, children do better in school.
- Parents need the support of the school and the community in meeting their obligations to their children.
- Schools need the help of parents to teach children effectively.
- Communities need to support education.
- The family, the community, and the school must work together.

***Every board of education must have a plan to involve parents, along with teachers, administrators, and community members, in children's education.***

## WHAT CAN YOU DO? GET INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING.

*"Children are our most precious gift and our greatest responsibility"*

*A Parent*

***Support Your Children At Home***

- Be interested in homework. Help by making a time and place available.
- Talk to your children about school, their friends, your hopes and expectations, and what matters to you and to them.
- Provide a healthy, safe, positive environment with regular routines and time for family fun.
- Limit and supervise television viewing.
- Help your children get along with others.
- Select playthings which encourage problem solving and active participation.
- Keep a calendar of school activities. Mark when assignments are due, when tests, conferences, or appointments are scheduled, or the times of special events.
- Keep important papers about your child in a safe place. You need to keep things like your social security card, birth certificate, passport or green card, health clinic card, driver's license, pay stub, W-2 form. Also your child's birth certificate, last report card, immunization record, proof of address.
- Encourage your children. Let them know you are proud of their efforts and achievements.
- Tell your child what you expect. Establish logical consequences for behavior.

***Communicate***

- Get to know your child's teacher(s).
- Ask how you can help at home.
- Attend parent conferences—or arrange a time to meet with the teacher(s).
- Respond to notes, phone calls, and reports.
- If your child is having a problem, help must be provided. Establish weekly communication to keep track of progress.
- Tell the school about your child—what he's good at, what she's interested in, how you see her as a person, what your hopes are.
- Discuss your concerns with school administrators. Offer suggestions. Request a response.

## PRINCIPLES OF A NEW COMPACT FOR LEARNING

*"Success in changing our schools will depend on hard work from all of us; but, most importantly, it will depend on the enterprise of people in local schools and communities—the people closest to the action."*

*Chancellor*
*R. Carlos Carballada*

- All children can learn and contribute to their families and communities.
- Parents, teachers, and others must work together to help children learn. We will be successful if children know and are able to do more.
- Our society must demand the best from everyone. Our goal is to help children live and work together now and in the future.
- Children in all schools should have the same chance to learn whoever they are and wherever they live. All children should have good teachers and good schools.
- Everyone plays a part in making sure children learn. Each person must accept responsibility for making sure children do not fail.
- Praise schools, students, families, and teachers who do well. Give help where it is needed.

- If you want to get involved, call or visit your local school. Get in touch with a teacher or the principal. Contact the superintendent.
- Get in touch with the Board of Education for your district.

### *Support Your School*

- Talk with teachers about your hopes and goals for the year. Work together to develop a plan to reach those goals.
- Volunteer in the classroom, library, lunchroom.
- Arrange to visit for a period of time just to get a sense of what your child's day is like.
- Join the parent/teacher/student organization (or work to start one).
- Encourage children to participate in sports, music, drama, or other activities and attend games or performances.
- Encourage teachers to develop assignments that involve other family members.

### *Become An Advocate*

- Work with your employers and others. Help them see how important it is for family members to use time to visit children's schools.
- Encourage businesses and community organizations to become more active in schools.
- Ask local newspapers and radio and television stations to report children's achievements.
- Become informed about your local school. Obtain a handbook of school policy or request that a handbook be prepared.
- Know your school board members and attend school board meetings.
- Participate in local, State, and regional advocacy groups.

### *Share In Decision Making*

- Pay taxes.
- Vote in school board elections.
- Work with teachers, administrators, and others in the community to make your school better.

For information about
*Parent Partnerships*
contact:
Office of
Parent Partnerships
and Student Development
New York State
Education Department
55 Hanson Place
Brooklyn, New York
11217
(718) 260-2797

For information about
*A New Compact for Learning*
contact:
Office of Policy,
Instruction and Assessment
New York State
Education Department
Room 775 EBA
Albany, New York
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